

SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM LLP
ONE MANHATTAN WEST
NEW YORK, NY 10001

TEL: (212) 735-3000

FAX: (212) 735-2000

WWW.SKADDEN.COM

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DIRECT DIAL
212-735-2995
DIRECT FAX
917-777-2995
EMAIL ADDRESS
JOCELYN.STRAUBER@SKADDEN.COM

June 16, 2021

BY ECF

The Honorable Valerie E. Caproni
United States District Judge
U.S. District Court
Southern District of New York
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Re: *United States v. Velez*, 19 Cr. 862 (Deeshuntee Stevens)

Dear Judge Caproni:

I write on behalf of my client, Deeshuntee Stevens, to respectfully request permission for Mr. Stevens to travel from Rochester, NY, to New York City on June 22, to attend his daughter's middle school graduation. If granted permission, Mr. Stevens will travel by bus to and from New York City, leaving Rochester in the early morning hours of June 22, and returning in the early morning hours of June 23. He will not stay overnight in New York City.

The graduation ceremony will begin at 9:30 a.m. on June 22, and will take place outside, at a high school in the northeast Bronx. If permitted to travel, Mr. Stevens would also attend a small celebratory gathering at Melissa Blondet's residence following the ceremony. In addition to Mr. Stevens, there will be five attendees at the gathering, all of whom reside in the same household and are fully vaccinated and/or at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease, including: Mr. Stevens' two daughters, who are thirteen and eight years old; Ms. Blondet, with whom Mr. Stevens maintains a close relationship; and Ms. Blondet's two other children, a

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nineteen-year-old daughter and a two-year-old son. The gathering at Ms. Blondet's home is consistent with New York State's rules with respect to gatherings at private residences because only six people will be present.¹ As Mr. Stevens is fully vaccinated, the gathering is also consistent with current CDC guidelines, which permit fully vaccinated people to "[v]isit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing."² Mr. Stevens would return to Rochester after the gathering at Ms. Blondet's residence.

The office of Pretrial Services does not object to this request, and the United States Attorney's Office defers to Pretrial Services.

As the Court is aware, Mr. Stevens has traveled to New York City with the Court's permission for family events and legal visits on several prior occasions. Those trips were without incident.

As the Court is also aware, on June 10, 2021, Mr. Stevens pled guilty before your Honor to conspiring to distribute heroin and fentanyl in violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(b)(1)(B) and 846. Your Honor permitted Mr. Stevens to remain on bail on the same conditions of release initially imposed on August 21, 2020. Those conditions include: (1) a \$100,000 personal recognizance bond, signed by Mr. Stevens and co-signed by three financially responsible persons; (2) home detention with electronic monitoring, except to attend work, to seek employment (with agreement of the office of Pretrial Services as to the specifics), and for medical visits and legal visits, at the Rochester, New York home of Jesseivett Orta, a close family friend serving as third-party custodian; and (3) travel restricted to the state of New York.

¹ See New York State, *Travel, Large Gatherings and Quarantines*, <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/travel-large-gatherings-and-quarantines> ("Previously limited to no more than 10 people, effective March 22, 2021, gatherings statewide at private residences will be limited to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors.").

² "Effective May 19, New York State has adopted the CDC's 'Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People' for most businesses and public settings." New York State, *Novel Coronavirus*, <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>. Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, "fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing" but "[p]revention measures[.]" including social distancing and wearing masks, "are still recommended for unvaccinated people." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html> (last updated May 28, 2021).

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Respectfully submitted,

s/ Jocelyn E. Strauber

cc: Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam S. Hobson
Assistant U.S. Attorney Elinor L. Tarlow
U.S. Pretrial Services Officer Jonathan Lettieri
U.S. Pretrial Services Officer Jeremy Bedette

Application GRANTED.

SO ORDERED.



Date: June 17, 2021

HON. VALERIE CAPRONI
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE